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Vincent Davis, Director
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MEMORANDUM #3

TO: Admiral Stan Turner, USN
OEOB Suite 347
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

FROM: Vince Davis

RE: Some reasons why I do not wish to work directly for any
U.S. government department or agency (particularly the CIA)

1. Operational problems with institutional labels

Throughout my academic career, I have made a strong effort to avoid labels pinned on me...any kind of labels, such as liberal, conservative, hawk, dove, Republican, Democrat, southerner, westerner, easterner, Ivy Leaguer, private university man, state university man, etc., etc.

Similarly, I always tried hard to avoid having anyone think that I was a captive of the point of view of any agency or department in Washington. Therefore, back in the latter half of the 1960's and earlier 1970's when I had a little time for occasional consulting work around Washington, I spread it around as much as possible...doing a few small chores from time to time for Defense, State, AID, USIA, the NSC, even for Agriculture and Interior. As long as I did a little work for a wide variety of agencies, it was clear that I was not "owned and operated" by any one single agency.

Since some of my academic research and writing dealt with the Navy, and since some people knew that I was also a Naval Reservist, I was particularly concerned to avoid appearing as a "mouthpiece" for Navy viewpoints. This does not mean that I went out of my way to be critical of the Navy, but neither did I go out of my way to find things to praise. My fundamental interest was simply in being honest.

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 2

I think that I have been largely successful in avoiding the labeling problem, but not always. One little episode that still infuriates me, after about 10 years, was a review of my book The Admirals Lobby which appeared in the American Political Science Review--and the APSR is the premier journal in its field. The reviewer tried to create the impression that I was a Navy man, and that I had written a pro-Navy apology. In the review, he even said that I was an alumnus of the Naval Academy, which was really surprising to my Alma Mater--Vanderbilt University--where I had also served as Dean of the Alumni Office. Indeed, at that time, I had made only two social visits (not professional visits) to the Naval Academy in my whole life. To add insult to injury, the reviewer was Air Force Major John C. "Chuck" Ries, who knew me fairly well, and who was on the faculty at the Air Force Academy. Furthermore, Chuck was familiar with writing books that were outlets for service viewpoints, because his own doctoral dissertation was guided by the Air Force Chief of Staff who wanted Chuck's dissertation to be an attack on McNamara. Also, several people in the Air Force had been unhappy about a few things that I had said critical of the Air Force (during World War II) in one of my earlier books. So, the Air Force guys were interested in doing a little smear job on me, trying to picture me as a Navy mouthpiece. Fortunately, anybody who read The Admirals Lobby knew that it was not altogether favorable toward the Navy, because my main conclusion was the idea that admirals in general are pretty poor politicians in the political/bureaucratic infighting around Washington--a point that still strikes me as generally valid. And, as a further aside, I have done a lot more consulting and lecturing for the Army and the Air Force than for the Navy over the past decade (not counting my entire year in the Nimitz Chair at Newport)--probably because Army and Air Force people attach more importance to academic people than does the Navy.

The paragraph above is merely a minor illustration of a very large point, and it is a point easily understood by all sociologists. In a small town, such as Plains, Georgia, or Algood, Tennessee (my hometown), everybody knows everybody else, warts and all. People are seen whole, good points and bad points. But few people live these days in Smalltown, USA. Most people live in large urban complexes, and rarely get to know even their neighbors. Nobody knows anybody as a whole person.

MEMO #3

Turner

5/2/77

Page 3

In modern urbanized industrial society, since nobody really knows anybody as a whole person, we deal in labels and stereotypes and "images." We have only fleeting impressions of each other, from press reports or television or occupational affiliation and other miscellaneous tidbits. But we make large decisions affecting each other's lives based on these kinds of fragmentary evidence.

Sometimes these impressionistic stereotypes are favorable, sometimes unfavorable. For example, if I walked out on the street and told people that I am bringing a guest lecturer to the campus who is "a faculty member at Harvard," right away the assumption is likely to be that the Harvard professor is very bright, he has a certain amount of social grace and polish, and he is probably a rather distinguished person. But, if I walked out on the street and told people that I am bringing a guest lecturer who is "a faculty member at East Tincup State Teachers College in North Dakota," the instant assumption is likely to be that the Tincup man is none too bright, not very articulate, probably a little rough around the edges in social situations, and certainly not a VIP.

The term "McCarthyism" is a slur, referring back to the late Senator Joe McCarthy, and means a form of smear and character assassination based on innuendo and "guilt by association." What I am saying, however, is that almost all of us in large urbanized industrialized societies engage in some form and degree of McCarthyism almost everyday. We need to make quick decisions about people whom we do not actually know, so we grab for a handle, and the handle turns out to be the quickest available label. We don't have a "truth in packaging" law that protects people from some of the more vicious results of labeling and stereotyping.

Here is just one small example of how a variation of McCarthyism can work, from the big front-page article in the New York Times of April 24 which reported on the construction of President Carter's energy plan. The article said that Dr. Schlesinger and several "members of the staff regarded an official in another agency with suspicion because of the official's friendship with an executive of the natural gas industry."

MEMO #3

Turner

5/2/77

Page 4

So, holy smokes, some guy gets blackballed just because he has a friend in the natural gas industry! Guilt by association? People could put me in just about any pigeonhole on this basis, because I have friends in almost all walks of life...in the energy industries, elsewhere in big business, but in anti-business groups too, in labor, multimillionaires and poor slumdwellers, men, women, black, white, yellow, in the U.S. and on almost every continent of the world.

Labels are major obstacles to social contacts. Labels are barriers to communication. Any given label may make a person highly acceptable in some circles, but highly unacceptable in others. In my field of work, I need to be able to communicate personally and warmly and effectively with the widest variety of people...with faculty members from all kinds of schools, with students from widely varying backgrounds, with potential invited guests from many fields, with all kinds of alumni ranging from simple farmers to prominent corporate executives.

In short, I think I have been generally successful in avoiding the more serious labels that would prevent me from having useful contacts with most people. I have a hunch that I may know more persons around the nation and worldwide who call me by first name, and who keep my address and phone numbers on file, that perhaps any other man in U.S. academic life. Most professors lead narrow isolated lives, but whatever I have been able to achieve in my academic career is largely because I have played it in precisely the opposite direction. Give me a description of almost any kind of person that you would like to contact, and I think I could pick up my phone and reach that type of person who would know me by first name.

This is not a matter of personal vanity with me. It's an operational requirement for doing a good job in my work. I have always been associated, by choice, with small organizations still trying to get well established, rather than with large powerful organizations. Small organizations need lots of help and lots of friends in many places. We render much help and assistance, and we get lots of help and assistance in return. Maybe it's the "Golden Rule" in practice, but it's a practical necessity rather than a moral axiom for us. However, IT CANNOT BE DONE IF WE GET LABELED AND STEREOTYPED SUCH THAT MANY CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE WANT TO HAVE NO CONTACT WITH US.

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 5

Stan, you must understand this yourself. When you took your new position, you had the option of retiring from the Navy and working as a civilian, or remaining in uniform. The pay would have been better as a civilian. But you chose to remain in uniform. Why? I am convinced that a large part of your reasoning was the simple fact that your entire professional career, your whole sense of who you are, your self-identification, your self-esteem, and--most importantly--your integrity, are wrapped up in the idea of being an admiral in the Navy. Therefore, when you had the choice of remaining Admiral Turner, U.S. Navy, who just happens to have the assignment at the CIA, or Mr. Turner of the CIA, you preferred to remain Admiral Turner. I fully agree with your reasoning. If you were going to wear any label, you wanted to continue wearing the label which had served you well--and which you have served so well--for a distinguished career. Admiral Stan Turner says something--it stands for honesty, integrity, duty, honor, devotion to country. Mr. Stan Turner does not say anything in particular--it carries no particular message. As Admiral Turner, you came aboard at the CIA as an obvious outsider, from another branch of government service largely untouched by any scandal in decades. As Mr. Turner, you would have reported aboard as merely another civilian asked to try to get the Agency in better shape.

President Carter clearly had similar thoughts in mind in his 1976 election campaign when he tried very hard to win without compromising himself--without becoming the captive of any special interest group. He did not want to owe any big political debts to any identifiable group. He did not want to be "owned and operated" by anybody--he did not want to be anybody's puppet. I greatly admire him for all of this.

My reasoning in not wanting to work for any federal agency is largely the same as your reasoning in preferring to remain Admiral Turner rather than Mr. Turner, and President Carter's reasoning in wanting to be the leader of all the people rather than the captive of any special groups. I don't want to be...

...Vince Davis of the State Department
...Vince Davis of the Defense Department
...Vince Davis of Central Intelligence

Those are labels, and in some quarters they are big handicaps, indeed, in some quarters where I need to operate.

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 6

Indeed, if "I had my druthers" (to use an old southern expression), I would prefer not to be...

...Vince Davis of Tennessee
...Vince Davis of Kentucky
...Vince Davis from Princeton
...Vince Davis, political scientist

Even those labels can be handicaps in some quarters where I need to operate. If I had my choice, I would prefer to be simply...

---Vince Davis---

with all of the warts and imperfections that the name might convey, but also with whatever I have achieved as a part of the simple symbolism of the name.

Of course, a presidential appointment can make a difference in the symbolism. The Office of the Presidency still enjoys enormous respect in this nation, even if some individual presidents have not retained universal esteem. You had the benefit of a presidential appointment, and thus--as I suggested a few paragraphs above--you were Admiral Turner, the good military professional, loyally accepting a new assignment from your Commander in Chief. But it would be quite another thing if I accepted an invitation from some lesser person (even a lesser person as distinguished as yourself) to become merely another bureaucrat somewhere in the bowels of an agency in Washington.

If I did that, I would immediately acquire the label and the tag associated with that agency in the minds of many people. Professors, unlike admirals, do not carry their titles with them into civilian government service. Back in 1969, after a few months had elapsed, Professor Kissinger was merely Mr. Kissinger on the NSC staff, and Professor Brzezinski is already appearing in the newspapers as merely Mr. Brzezinski or maybe sometimes Dr. Brzezinski. I am not complaining about this. I merely note that I would lack the protective coloration which you gain by carrying your admiral's title around with you.

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Page Denied

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 8

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[REDACTED] All of the people whom I have personally known at the Agency have been honorable people, with a sense of professionalism.

But, to repeat, my personal opinion of the Agency, and your personal desires for the Agency's reputation, are beside the point when we talk about a strategy for enhancing the Agency's public stature.

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MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 9

More recently, about three years ago, some Agency people asked me if the Patterson School would be willing to accept an open unclassified research project from the CIA. I said to them, "What do you mean by 'open'?" They said, "You can publicize it anyway you want." I said, "I want you Agency people to publicize it, and all of the other universities that have such contracts." They assured me that some very prominent universities held such contracts, but that the Agency would issue no press releases on the subject--it was up to each university to do this if it wished. This demonstrated to me that the Agency still did not have the foggiest notion of what was needed to implement a concept of "openness." So I told the CIA to forget about doing any business with me unless and until they learned something about how to relate to the academic community.

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There are a few CIA people of my acquaintance who do have a deep and real understanding of the academic community, but damned few. I think that you yourself lack this understanding.

The academic community is a peculiar beast, and you need to know how to approach it. It has many unattractive features, but so do most other established professions--lawyers, doctors, military officers, etc. It has some similarities with other professions, but as with any true profession, it has peculiar characteristics of its own.

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When we talk about the academic community and the CIA, no matter how wrongheaded many academic people may be on the subject, it's important to remember that there is at least a little bit of fire behind all of the smoke.

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 10

The first thing to remember is that there are some fundamental and enduring incompatibilities between a true professional in academic life, and a true professional in intelligence work. Openness and free communications are the very essence of academic work, whereas a certain amount of secretiveness is fundamental to intelligence work. Thus, the academic community and the intelligence community will always stand apart from each other, and they should. But, with a viable strategy, they could stand apart while still respecting each other, and while occasionally even working together in limited ways that would be useful to everybody and to the best interests of the world. As I tell my anti-intelligence friends, "You have two choices: You can prefer for government policy to be based on knowledge, or on ignorance. If you prefer for policy to be based on knowledge, and if you as an academic person possess some knowledge, then you should want to share it." The logic is perfect, but it does not often work because we are dealing with a highly emotional subject.

OK, so given the fundamental incompatibilities, the most we can hope for is improved respect--not love--between the academic and intelligence communities. Again, there are strategies that, I believe, could improve the respect, but nobody has asked me to make a careful presentation of these. I will get into some of these possible strategies in the following Memo #4 in this series.

Meanwhile, the second thing to remember is that the CIA has been guilty--at least, as reported in the press over the past decade--of some serious offenses against laws and the U.S. Constitution. A former director, Mr. Helms, is under grand jury investigation. And the Church Committee spent a few million dollars of the taxpayers' money looking into all these and related matters. President Ford issued an instant "pardon" for President Nixon, but this did not immediately change the perception of Mr. Nixon in the eyes of many Americans. President Carter or you or somebody can try to issue the equivalent of an instant pardon for the CIA, but this will not immediately change the perception of the Agency in the eyes of many Americans. You need to face the facts as they exist--at least, the perceptions as they exist--and initiate a long-range strategy to change perceptions.

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 11

Having a CIA label hanging around your neck can be an eternal albatross even with other government agencies. For

a good reputation in many prominent academic circles. Hypocrisy? Yes. But, facts as they are? Yes.

It's even worse in academic circles. You are somewhat familiar [redacted] But, regardless of what you have heard from him or others, I can assure you that there are numerous prominent faculty members at [redacted] who are not entirely happy about his CIA connections, and this is bound to work against him in various ways on that campus as well as elsewhere in academic life. Academic people, like Navy people or people in other organizations, have little ways to ostracize you or otherwise to let you know that you lack the desired coloration if you are out of step with the prevailing majority.

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You may also be familiar with the current case of

[redacted] and a follow-up exchange in the current May 7 issue of the same magazine.

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Many prominent universities (including most in the Ivy League), and many distinguished professional societies in academic life have enacted policies and guidelines over the past decade designed to strongly discourage if not actually

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 12

to prohibit faculty members from doing any kind of work for the intelligence community, most particularly the CIA, and in some cases for other federal agencies in the foreign affairs field as well. There are strong sanctions. THIS IS POWERFUL STUFF for anybody who earns a living and is trying to make a career in academic life. Working for the CIA in academic life is about as popular as for an M.D. to work for socialized medicine, and professional organizations have many effective ways to discipline people who do unpopular things. Academic freedom? No! But a basic fact of life today? Yes!

On this point, I had fun rubbing it in with my academic colleagues, telling them on many occasions that I found much more genuine academic freedom during my 1970-71 year on the faculty at the Naval War College than during my immediately preceding 1969-70 year on the faculty at Princeton. But this was decidedly quixotic behavior on my part, and it changed no minds.

What would happen if I worked under your appointment at the CIA during 1977-78? First, this albatross would hang around my neck for years to come. Operationally, it would have the following consequences:

- Certain students would never make application to the Patterson School.
- Many distinguished faculty members would decline invitations to be guest lecturers at the Patterson School.
- I myself would receive very few invitations to be a guest lecturer or consultant on other campuses, or for other government agencies, and from no foreign countries.
- Certain prominent foundations would have no interest in making grants to the Patterson School, and other organizations would have no interest in sending us RFP's on possible contract proposals.

Stan, do you think I lack guts? Do you think I am afraid to stand up and be counted? If so, you have missed the whole point here. I don't really think I need to prove to anybody that I have stood alone on many occasions when the multitudes were whoring off in some other direction but, if you want one little piece of testimony, I will enclose a copy of a letter on an entirely different matter but on my behalf, written by the distinguished Bryant Chair Professor

MEMO #3
Turner
5/2/77
Page 13

Emeritus of International Relations

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My basic point is that I am entirely willing to help you fight this problem, and to enhance the Agency's cordial contacts with the academic community. But I am not much inclined to play Sancho Panza to your Don Quixote--which is to say that you need another strategy than the one I think you are likely to pursue.

OK, the strategy that I will suggest, at least insofar as it might involve myself, Memo #4 will detail these ideas.

[End of Memo #3]

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